

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

INRE-00 CIAE-00 SP-02 EURE-00 /035 W

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O 021850Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4961

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 0065

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJ: FEELER FROM FORMER DC SECRETARY FANFANI ON US VISIT

1. EMBASSY CONTACT CLOSE TO DC SECRETARY FANFANI CALLED EMBOFF DECEMBER 30 TO BROACH POSSIBILITY OF FANFANI VISIT TO US. CONTACT STATED THAT FANFANI "THINKING OF" US TRIP DURING LATTER PART OF JANUARY, POSSIBLY BEGINNING JANUARY 21. VISIT WOULD BE PRIVATE AND MIGHT INVOLVE TOURISM AND POSSIBLE CONTACT WITH NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE. FANFANI "MIGHT" BE ACCOMPANIED BY DC SENATE GROUP LEADER BARTOLOMEI.

2. CONTACT ASKED FOR EMBASSY REACTION TO IDEA AND INDICATION OF LEVEL AT WHICH FANFANI MIGHT BE RECEIVED. "TWO MINUTE" MEETING WITH PRESIDENT FORD SUGGESTED. EMBOFF TOLD CONTACT HE WOULD REPORT THIS MATTER TO APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES.

3. EMBASSY BELIEVES IT WOULD BE COUNTER TO POLICY FOR EITHER PRESIDENT OR SECRETARY TO RECEIVE FANFANI NOW. WE HAVE BEEN SHOWING MARKED ATTENTION TO YOUNGER LEADERS AND AFFIRMING OUR SUPPORT FOR FENEWAL AND REJUVENATION OF THE DC. IN CURRENT BYZANTINE ATMOSPHERE OF PRE-CONGRESS MANEUVERING, RECEPTION OF FANFANI BY TOP US AUTHORITIES WOULD INEVITABLY BE TAKEN AS A SIGN OF US BLESSING FOR A "COMEBACK" WITHIN DC PARTY. THIS IS NOT IN OUR INTEREST. WHILE FANFANI'S VIGOR AND FIRM ANTI-COMMUNIST STANCE WITHIN DC IN RECENT YEARS HAS BEEN USEFUL
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IN COUNTERBALANCING DC LEFTWARDS TENDENCIES, FANFANI PERSONIFIES

TO MANY ITALIANS MUCH THAT IS WRONG WITH THE DC OLD GUARD LEADERSHIP AND HAS NO TENDENCY TO SUPPORT MEANINGFUL REFORM. WE THEREFORE INTEND TO TELL OUR CONTACT THAT APPOINTMENTS WITH TOP US AUTHORITIES COULD NOT BE ARRANGED AT THIS TIME, ESPECIALLY IN VIEW OF THE IMPENDING DC CONGRESS. SHOULD HE INSIST ON MAKING TRIP AS PLANNED, WE BELIEVE THAT, IN VIEW OF HIS PAST TOP POSITIONS IN PARTY AND GOVERNMENT, AND CONTINUING INFLUENCE IN DC, HE SHOULD BE RECEIVED AT ASSISTANT SECRETARY LEVEL. IF OUR CONTACT SUGGESTS THAT FANFANI MIGHT POSTPONE TRIP UNTIL AFTER CONGRESS IN ORDER TO SEE PRESIDENT OR SECRETARY, WE WILL TELL HIM THAT FANFANI'S REQUEST WOULD BE RE-EXAMINED AT THAT TIME, BUT THAT NO ADVANCE COMMITMENT CAN NOW BE MADE.

4. COMMENT: FANFANI FEELER HAS BEEN MADE IN SUCH INDIRECT FASHION THAT EMBASSY BELIEVES IT CAN BE POLITELY "TURNED OFF" AS SUGGESTED ABOVE. UNLESS DEPARTMENT PERCEIVES AN OBJECTION, WE WILL CONVEY ABOVE MESSAGE TO CONTACT JANUARY 8 OR 9. VOLPE

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